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A PROPHECY FULFILLED

The Present War Predicted
in 1911

SECRET DIPLOMACY EXPOSED IN

La Guerre Qui Vient
(*The Coming War*)

By Francis Delaisi
(Member French Chamber of Deputies)

PUBLISHED IN PARIS IN MAY, 1911

THREE YEARS BEFORE THE WAR

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*What Conrad Nies, Editor of the "Denver Herald,"
says of this booklet :*

" * * * It is an exceedingly clever and attractive presentation of certain secret diplomatic transactions within the French cabinet during the eight-year period, commencing in 1903, which Francis Delaisi pictured in his own graphic way, to his French compatriots in 1911. The strictly objective judgment of this clear-sighted Frenchman, who presents the political situation of Europe at that period without bias, makes his forecast of the present titanic struggle, which he regarded as inevitable, one of the most valuable additions to the literature on the worlds war. His disclosures are intensely interesting, first, because it required courage to make them even at that time, and second, because subsequent events proved his conception to be very nearly correct. No conclusion should be reached on this subject without reading Delaisi's *La guerre qui vient*."

DEC 26 1916

LA GUERRE QUI VIENT

The Prophecy of 1911

PREFACE

In 1911, that is, three years before the outbreak of the European war, there was published by the Paris periodical "La Guerre Sociale," an article by Francis Delaisi, member of the Chamber of Deputies, entitled "La Guerre qui vient" (in English, "The War to Come"). It is of minor importance to what extent his warnings against "secret diplomacy" and political intrigues, as exposed therein, were heeded by the French people at that time. But it is highly interesting and of transcendent importance **now** to follow the author through his exposures of conditions prevailing in French administrative circles from 1903 until 1911, and which, three years later, precipitated the most terrible war in all history.

Nothing which has been written so far comes nearer picturing the real causes of the present war, or as near being a prophecy, as "The War to Come," because Delaisi, with deep penetration, saw clearly that the conspiracies of some of France's leading politicians and financiers who used the battle cry "revenge" to cloak their scheming for private profit, would lead inevitably to a crisis. If Delaisi had succeeded in making his compatriots see that crisis as it appeared before his own vision, if they could have sensed, as he did, that England's friendship for France was only the child of its determination to crush a commercial rival, perhaps there would have been no war.

The author of "The War to Come" shows conclusively how little, if anything, the public really knows of what is going on behind the diplomatic scenes; how the "dear people" are purposely kept in ignorance of the plots hatched out there by grasping special interests, plots which may have the most disastrous consequences in shaping the destinies of nations.

It is a scathing denunciation of all secret diplomacy, and therefore of paramount interest in this country just at this time.

The question "who or what caused the war?" will find a much readier answer in the light of this carefully correct translation*, of Delaisi's prediction written in May, 1911, that is, three years before the war. It is not a vague prophecy, but a forecast based on an accurate understanding of conditions then existing in France.

*This translation of "La Guerre qui vient" has been made as literal as possible, so as to preserve as nearly as possible the vernacular of the original French, and without regards to choice of English. The original, published in book form, can be obtained from eastern book-sellers.—The Translator.

THE COMING WAR

To speak of a possible, a probable or an approaching war sounds fatuous at first thought.

We have for a long time fondled ourselves with dreams of peace! We have so often pictured to ourselves the power of democracies and parliaments as a check on the warlike ambitions of governments; we have accustomed ourselves to count upon the desire of the masses for peace!

Certainly if public sentiment only were consulted in all countries of the globe, there would be nothing to fear.

It is quite evident that the mass of the German people has no desire to shoot our people, just as the great mass of English people want only to till their fields and work in their shops and factories in peace; and, as for the French, whether laborers or peasants, poor or well-to-do, international socialists, or radical patriots, they have only one desire—peace.

Then all would be well and we could rest securely if the people were the masters of their destinies.

Unfortunately, in every country of the world the people do not direct their foreign policy.

That function is the exclusive privilege of a very small number of functionaries, who are addressed as diplomats. These individuals, carefully selected, all belong (and also in our Republic) to the titled nobility or the aristocracy of wealth. All are subservient to the financial and industrial oligarchy and strive to obtain for them foreign loans or foreign orders for their goods; the ambassadors in gold braid are today no more and no less than the agents of the banks and the great commercial institutions.

“But,” you say, “above them stands the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is their chief, and who is himself responsible to Parliament.”

Oh, yes, a fine responsibility that is! When a representative asks any question about an incident of foreign policy, the government invariably makes solemn declaration about “peaceful intentions,” “the balance of power,” etc.

If the interrogator insists and demands exact details, the answer may be known in advance: “Diplomatic Secrets.”

Thanks to this system, neither people nor Parliament know anything, and may thus be entangled, without suspecting it, in the gravest of conflicts, and be driven into war by a few men.

Delcasse's Coup

This we saw clearly in 1905. At that time M. Delcasse had governed ten years, without interruption, the foreign policy of France. He had so well secured the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies that they approved all his statements without discussion. And this "little" man had become so conceited with pride that he no longer consulted the other ministers, his colleagues.

In that way he, during 1904 and 1905, in conjunction with the English Cabinet, and without informing anyone of his doings, manipulated the "isolation" of Germany. He endeavored to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance, negotiated with St. Petersburg, intrigued at Constantinople, and schemed that Germany, after being isolated, should be crushed by England with the help of France.

Naturally, William II was not slow to see through this manoeuvre and brusquely dictated an ultimatum through the mediation of Prince Radolin.

We remember the excitement and surprise which spread through the whole country at the time. One beautiful morning in June all the newspapers appeared with maps of the frontier on the first page—on one side we saw little black squares representing all the German army corps, on the other side little black squares for the French army corps. And everyone asked himself that morning if he would have to take his gun and knapsack and go break his head in the Vosges.

In the Chamber they passed an hour of veritable madness. The Deputies who knew that the Moroccan affair was of little importance, understood perfectly the fact that some unsuspected intrigue must be behind all this. They wanted to hold a session to cross-question Rouvier and to overthrow the Ministry.

But it must be said that Rouvier himself was the most surprised of all, and demanded an explanation from Delcasse.

Thère was held at the Elysee a council of the Ministers, which will remain historic. For two hours by the clock the little man disclosed to his stupefied colleagues his intrigues, and with audacious calmness declared himself plainly in favor of a continuance of the policy of "isolation," for a military alliance with England, and for war with Germany.

Rouvier and his colleagues were unanimous in their opinion to get rid of this dangerous man, and the relations with Berlin gradually assumed normal conditions.

But it is, nevertheless, true that a single man, without consulting anyone, had the power to involve millions of beings in a dangerous policy and without the knowledge of the Chambers, and even of the other Ministers, to bring a whole people, against their will, upon the verge of war.

So much is true, that even under a democratic government the people are not the masters of their own destinies.

'The Servile Press

"But," say you, "we have newspapers which should warn us of danger."

Ah! The press is well prompted!

In the first place the dispatches of the Agence Havas, which are the newspapers' source of information, are carefully gone over by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. They are so meagre that the great newspapers which keep posted on the foreign policy must apply to the foreign news agencies.

Le Matin receives the dispatches of the Times, L'Echo de Paris those of the Daily Telegraph, etc. What is more, they are all supplied from English news agencies, so that we in France never see the situation except through English eyes.

Concerning the articles and the commentaries written by the newspapers on these dispatches, that is very simple.

There is, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a press bureau. There daily a very amiable functionary receives the reporters. Very gently he expounds to them what they should "think" about the foreign policy.

Naturally he says only what conforms to the views of the Minister. All the newspapers repeat the interview the next morning; and the mass of people who have no other source of information believe what is told them.

One may judge by this whether the public is well informed. As a result of such procedure the Russo-Japanese war had broken out while the entire press was announcing that it would not take place; also that the whole world considered the Moroccan affair of no importance on the very day which nearly brought on the war; and finally, at this very moment, all Europe knows that the Franco-Russian Alliance is virtually dissolved, whereas our public alone believes it to be as solid as ever.

In short, our foreign policy is shaped without deference to either public opinion or Parliament; it is sometimes even beyond the control of the government.

In our suspicious democracy it depends upon a single man and a small coterie of financiers and men of affairs to unchain a war and embark this country upon a series of the most perilous adventures.

The Real Danger

But now this is not a hypothetical danger. At this very moment Deleasse's intrigue recommences. He is ready to repeat the coup of 1905.

A terrible war between England and Germany is preparing. In all parts of the globe the two adversaries are measuring and threatening each other. The affair of the Bagdad Railway and the question of the fortifications of Flushing show to what degree the crisis has become acute.

But for fighting the two powers need the assistance of France.

Germany lacks capital and needs our money.

England, which does not have compulsory military service, needs our army.

Our government is accordingly the master of the situation. If it refuses William II our gold and George V our soldiers, peace is almost assured.

But here Cruppi negotiates a military alliance with England.

If it is signed, we shall be compelled to fight on the plains of Belgium in order to assure to the gentlemen in London the possession of Antwerp; and we shall then at one stroke be exposed to all the dangers of a German invasion.

And so this veritably astonishing thing happens. All the foreign newspapers are talking of this military alliance. All the great French newspapers are reproducing the comment of the foreign press. Not one has dared to say that the news is incorrect.

Nevertheless no one in France has said anything. Not a single deputy has risen to ask that the government make a denial or give an explanation. Not a single Socialist leader, in the presence of such serious reports, has dared to even question the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A single voice has been raised to call attention to the danger. Merrheim of the C. G. T., recently a delegate at the International Metallurgical Congress, could see with his eyes how acute the Anglo-German situation has become. On his

return from Birmingham he signalled the danger in the "Vie Ouvriere."

But no one budged.

The Anglo-German Duel

Very well! Here Mr. Delcasse returns to power.

The man who in 1905 nearly involved us in a war without consulting either public opinion, or Parliament, or even his own colleagues, again takes over the direction of "our" foreign policy. For no one in Europe is deceived. M. Cruppi, former magistrate, will be only a straw man at the Quai d'Orsay. Moreover, M. Delcasse, the Minister of the Marine, will then be more at ease to conclude the military treaty which must bind us to England.

In a few weeks perhaps our financiers will have sold the skins of a hundred thousand Frenchmen to their colleagues in London in exchange for a few Turkish or Ethiopian railways.

It is time for those who do not want to see themselves treated as dumb brutes to open their eyes, to consider calmly the European situation, and to see the dangerous intrigue in which our financial oligarchy is about to engage.

The Commercial Wars

Formerly the nations were peoples of peasants, and naturally their leaders pursued an agricultural policy; their dream was to expand their territory and to annex their neighbors' fields. That is why their conflicts were frontier conflicts and their wars for annexation and conquest. Victorious Napoleon took possession of Belgium; the conquerer Bismarck annexed Alsace-Lorraine, etc.

But today all this is changed. The great European nations are governed by men of affairs—bankers, manufacturers, export merchants. The aim of these men is to seek everywhere markets for their rails, their cotton goods, their capital. Throughout the whole world they struggle for the control of the railways, loans, and mining concessions, etc. And if, perchance, two rival groups cannot agree on the exploitation of new countries, they appeal to arms.

Thus we saw the Japanese fight with the Chinese in 1895 for the exploitation of Korea; in 1898 the Americans battled with the Spaniards for the exploitation of Cuba. In 1899 England fought with the Boers for the possession of the Transvaal mines; in 1900 all Europe invaded Peking to

impose their railways upon the Chinese; finally, in 1904, the Japanese and Russians slaughtered each other for eighteen months to find out who should have the right to exploit Manchuria.

Five wars in ten years! The triumph of Pacifism! None of these wars resulted in conquest—Manchuria will always be a part of the Celestial Empire; China has kept its Emperor; South Africa is an autonomous political unity, and Cuba is an independent republic. But their railroads, their loans, their import duties are all the booty of the victors.

Our great modern financial oligarchies are not looking for subjects, but customers; they do not engage in "patriotic" wars after the old fashion.

These men of affairs wage commercial wars.

The English Industry vs. the German Industry

But now a conflict is preparing itself, compared to which the horrible slaughter of the Russo-Japanese war will be child's play.

At all points over the globe the English capitalists are struggling with the German capitalists, and one can see no other way out but war—provided the working classes of both countries do not revolt.

During the entire nineteenth century England was the undisputed queen of the industrial world. It was said of her: "She is a block of iron on a block of coal." She had an abundant supply of minerals to manufacture engines and the coal which is necessary to drive them. She could, therefore, ahead of all other nations, develop an incomparable industry. And the sea, which completely surrounds her, permitted her to build a navy without equal.

And thus during a century, the spinners and weavers of Manchester and the steel mills of Birmingham spread over the whole world their cotton goods, cloths, hardware, their rails and locomotives, realizing, without great effort, magnificent profits.

Only France, already much in arrears, offered a weak competition; it is on that account that our capitalists formerly preached to the people of the hatred of "perfidious Albion."

Finally, in 1898, at the time of the Fashoda incident, France, i. e., the oligarchy governing France, gave up its pretensions to great power. And England believed herself the undisputed mistress of the world's commerce.

But there an unexpected rival arose. Up to 1870 Germany was an almost exclusively agricultural country; but her soil was poor and 300,000 Germans emigrated every year to distant America, seeking a more fertile soil, which would support them.

After the war insensibly all this changed. Bismarck, whom our chauvinists picture to us as planning continually to charge his Uhlans against us, had only one idea—to make of his country a great industrial nation like Great Britain.

Little by little, on the banks of the Rhine, in Westphalia, in Saxony, in Silesia, there arose great blast furnaces, steel mills and forges; millions of spindles turned in the cotton mills; woolen mills, chemical industries and great shipyards sprang up as if by magic. The railways of all the small states were placed under one management; the government dredged or canalized the streams; the admirably constructed harbors were fitted up in first-class order, and a merchant marine, becoming gradually stronger, carried the flag and the merchandise of the Empire to all quarters of the globe.

Then the English began to grow uneasy. At first they had regarded the efforts made by the heavy Saxons to copy their industry with a disdainful smile. They asserted and believed that the Germans manufactured nothing but trash.

Yet this “trash” overwhelmed them. To relieve themselves of it they enacted a law that all articles of German manufacture should bear the trade-mark, “Made in Germany.” They sought thus to discredit their rivals.

But what was their surprise when they discovered that a very large number of excellent articles which had been previously accepted as the best products of English industry, came directly from Westphalia, Saxony or Silesia! Thus it appeared that the astute German manufactured better and cheaper wares than the English!

Instead of discrediting them they had given them a very effective advertisement! This caused a veritable commotion amongst the coterie of Glasgow, Birmingham and Manchester capitalists.

At the same time, from all the principal markets of the globe, the English consuls, who watch international commerce, sent disquieting reports to London.

From everywhere they reported the presence and activity of German traveling salesmen, engineers and promoters, who were taking all the orders and securing concessions and loans.

A consul in Syria wrote to his government: "Formerly all the European products used here were purchased in England. Today I am writing to you on a table manufactured in Germany, with a German pen on German paper. Soon there will be nothing English left but myself."

On all sides the progress of British commerce was declining; while that of German commerce was increasing with disquieting rapidity.

The Bagdad Railway

Naturally the Kaiser supported the efforts of his merchants and bankers with all the forces at the disposal of his diplomacy. Everywhere his ambassadors endeavored to obtain concessions and orders for his countrymen.

Colonies were founded in Africa; they built railways across China; the mines of Chile were exploited, etc.

But it was especially upon Turkey that the people of Berlin cast their eyes.

In 1903, William II obtained from the Sultan Abdul-Hamid the concession of the Bagdad Railway, about which so much fuss is made at present by our great newspapers.

It runs for a stretch of 2800 kilometres (about 1700 miles), from Constantinople to the head of the Persian Gulf. It is a matter of nearly two hundred million dollars. One may easily imagine the great returns such an enterprise will yield to the bankers, iron works and promoters on the other side of the Rhine.

But it was found that this German railroad terminated in Mesopotamia in a region which the English always considered as a reservation for their own commerce. And, besides, this railway can, in a few days, transport Turkish troops into the neighborhood of Bombay and threaten the British domination of India.

The Appeal to Arms

At this the English capitalists took fright. Their first surprise was changed to uneasiness and later into fury.

Today in all parts of the globe, in the Balkan Peninsula, in Turkey, from Persia to China, in Central America, in Brazil, in the Argentine Republic and to Chile, the bankers of Berlin and London, the ship-owners of Liverpool and Hamburg, the industrial magnates of Glasgow and Essen, are involved in a struggle.

To defend at least the colonial commerce, Mr. Chamberlain, the head of the Birmingham steel industry, proposed a protective tariff; but the English workingmen unanimously rejected the same, as this project would have increased the cost of living. After this the great capitalists who govern England saw only one solution.

It would be necessary at all costs to do away with this unexpected rival who was threatening British dominance in all the markets of the world. Since the industrial competition could not be settled by peaceful means, recourse would have to be had to Dreadnoughts and an appeal to cannon.

Towards this goal the English government is working with marvelous co-operation.

That is how in our capitalistic societies the struggle between groups of rival financiers embroils nations in war.

The Isolation

So England, feeling herself beaten in the industrial fight, decided to appeal to the fortune of arms.

Her plan is a double one:

(1) To encircle Germany by a system of ententes and alliances which will leave her isolated in the heart of Europe without military or financial support at the time of danger.

Thus we saw Edward VII in 1903 approach France and conclude with our financiers the entente cordiale and abandon Morocco (which, by the way, did not belong to him) to them.

Soon after he reconciled himself to the Czar by making some concessions in Persia and the Balkan states; he sought to detach Italy from the triple alliance by offering her Albania; he aroused the traditional hatred of the Germans by the Hungarians; aided the young Turks with money and advice to overthrow Abdul Hamid for being too closely allied to William II. And soon we could see the day when Germany would be completely surrounded by hostile powers, finding herself alone in facing her redoubtable enemy.

The Era of the Dreadnought

(2) At the same time they committed themselves in London to formidable armaments.

The English engineers constructed the first Dreadnought, these gigantic vessels of 18, 20 and 22 thousand tons, carrying mounted in their turrets, thirty-four centimeter guns, throwing enormous shells of melinite 9000 metres.

Then all the principal battleships cruising in all the oceans of the world for protecting the empire "on which the sun never sets" were recalled and concentrated at the naval ports of the mother country.

These naval bases were changed. The principal ones had formerly been located at Plymouth, facing France, the ancient enemy.

They are now at Dover and Rosyth (Scotland), both commanding the entrance to the North Sea, the one in the south, the other in the north; both face towards Germany.

To stimulate the warlike feeling of the English people and arouse them to support the enormous cost of the naval programs, the entire fleet was drawn up in the Thames two years ago, from the mouth to the Port to London, to crystallize enthusiasm by the grand spectacle of the naval strength of the nation.

Finally journalists and ministers of the distant colonies were brought from all parts of the globe, from Australia, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand. They were shown what heavy costs the mother country had imposed upon herself; they were solemnly told that British preponderance was threatened. They were asked to contribute their share of the costs and to vote some battleships.

This was done. Today they build Dreadnoughts for account of the colonies, which also recruit, train and arm corps of volunteers.

All the forces of the empire in the five continents are today being strained in one immense effort to be ready for war.

Naturally enough the Germans, in the presence of this terrible menace, have not remained inactive.

But suddenly the Emperor sounded the alarm. In 1898 he uttered the famous words: "Our future lies on the water." Then he set to work designing and planning battleships and asked the Reichstag to vote a naval program.

At first the representatives did not understand and refused. But soon, thanks to the efforts of the Navy League, merchants, manufacturers and financiers were apprised of the threatening danger.

And thereafter, program followed program. Super-Dreadnoughts were added to Dreadnoughts; the great shipyards of Bremen, Hamburg and Stettin worked with feverish activity.

In order to meet these colossal expenses, the good-natured Germans consented, not without regret, to having taxes imposed even upon their beer and tobacco.

In 1914, when these programs will have actually been carried out, England will have thirty Dreadnoughts, Germany twenty-six.

The forces will be almost equal.

The War of Factories

What kind of a war will this be?

It is here we must depart from traditional ideas. It will not be a question of England's landing 100,000 men on the coasts of Hanover for marching on Berlin.

Nor will it be a question of Germany to hurl a landing force against London.

With the present development of naval forces this is nearly impossible; and, moreover, it would serve no purpose.

It is not a war of annexation or conquest which they would wage, but a commercial war. That is why there will be a return to the old methods of preying upon shipping and continental blockades.

What does England want? To ruin the Germany industry. A good way to do so is to deprive her of raw materials and prevent her exports.

That does not appear impracticable.

These great factories of the Rhine, of Saxony, of Silesia; these steel mills, cotton and woolen mills, which have carried on against their competitors of Birmingham and Manchester such terrible competition, with what do they operate?

They work iron ores which come from Spain and Sweden, cotton coming from the United States and Egypt; wool from the cape, from Australia and Argentina. And all these indispensable raw materials arrive by sea, notably through the two great ports of Bremen and Hamburg.

And when they have manufactured in enormous quantities the rails, locomotives, machines, cotton goods, cloths and fabrics which have partly supplanted English products, whence are they shipped? To Turkey, to Africa, to North and South America, to China, and also to Japan. It means that the greater part of Germany's exportations goes by sea, and principally from the two great ports of Bremen and Hamburg.

Very well: Suppose these two harbors and their neighbors on the North Sea are blockaded by an English fleet; immediately no more iron ore, cotton or wool can reach the factories along the Rhine, in Saxony and Silesia. The finished products cannot be exported, thus encumbering warehouses; no more can money come back to them; the dividends cease, and idleness becomes a harsh task-master. Grain and meat, which they bring in quantities from America, can no longer arrive, and the price of foodstuffs rises. Misery gradually bears down upon all the people.

It may be said that these merchants will endeavor to export and import by rail, and to make use of the foreign railways and ports, such as Dunkerque, Genoa and Trieste.

But this means of transportation is infinitely more costly than that by boat; it would suffice to hamper German industry during the entire extent of the war. In the meantime, supposing, which is probable, the ocean trade to be open to British ships during this time. The British products will little by little regain their former preponderance in all the great markets of the globe.

The London government will take advantage of its military superiority for making treaties and tariff agreements with various countries, will offer inducements for orders for rails, for concessions for railways, and wherever it can will create private "spheres of influence," like Morocco and Egypt.

When the war is over, Germany will find her place taken and the German industry will find itself in an inferior position for perhaps a century.

Thus bottling-up the harbors of the North Sea will be the aim of the future war.

The English Manoeuvres

And so that it may not be said: "These are all hypotheses, ingenious, probable perhaps, but after all only plain suppositions"—it must be recalled that the object of the great English naval manoeuvres two years ago was interception of merchant vessels passing between Spain and Ireland.

Over all this vast stretch the Admiralty had strung an immense line of battleships and cruisers, barring the entrance to the channel. And all the British merchant vessels (in case of war they would, of course, have been German vessels) which undertook to break through this line were halted and captured.

Likewise, here is the object of last year's manoeuvres: "Supposing a hostile fleet in the Atlantic, another in the North Sea, could an English fleet in the channel prevent their union?"

It is known that notwithstanding a strict watch, the squadron representing the German fleet coming from Bremen succeeded in breaking through the straits of Calais and passing through the Channel.

This caused a shiver of fear in all England and resulted in a vote of four additional battleships.

Therefore, according to the British Admiralty, the object of the next war must be to blockade the German ports and cut off the German merchant fleet, to prevent supplies from reaching its factories and the exportation of German products.

It is a kind of continental blockade that we shall see, as in the time of the great duel between Napoleon I and England.

And now since that is established, we can understand what role will be played by France in this merciless struggle.

To destroy by force the German industry, which troubles England, England has but one means—to cut off her sources of raw materials and shut off her exports by blockading her ports.

Suppose that the London Cabinet has decided on the blockade.

Some dark night, without warning anyone (for now-a-days war is started and declared afterwards), an English squadron will cross the North Sea and station itself at the mouth of the Elbe, stopping all ships coming from Hamburg. Another squadron will station itself at the mouth of the Weser and bar the way for ships coming from Bremen. They can pass no more.

At the same time a fleet of cruisers will patrol the Channel, and another will cruise between Scotland and Norway, stopping one after another, all the merchant ships destined for Germany.

The enemy's industry is blockaded.

Will all then be lost? And will the proud Kaiser be forced to capitulate?

Not at all.

The Backdoors of Germany

I have just said that the manufacturing establishments on the Rhine, in Saxony, and in Silesia, supply themselves with raw materials solely through Bremen and Hamburg. That is not exact.

There are two other ports that play almost as important a role in the economic life of Germany.

They are Rotterdam, and still more Antwerp.

Rotterdam, situated on the Rhine not far from its mouth, receives by thousands, the boats which, ascending that stream, bring to the blast furnaces and cotton mills of Westphalia, the iron ore, cotton and wool necessary for their business.

Likewise Antwerp, on the large estuary of the Schelde, is much nearer to Essen than Bremen. From there, by railway and the Belgian canals, the Rhenish industry obtains a large part of its raw materials. And it is by this route that it exports and distributes over the world the greater portion of its finished products.

Rotterdam and Antwerp have also become two great depots of the German industry. They are, commercially speaking, two German cities.

Only politically are they two foreign cities—Rotterdam being located in Holland and Antwerp in Belgium.

This is a fact of capital importance.

In effect, at the first sign of war, what will the Germans do? All of their ships finding themselves in foreign harbors at that time will denationalize themselves. They will hoist the Belgian, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish and French flags. Then quietly they will sail for Rotterdam or Antwerp.

What can the English navy do? Nothing at all, because they are neutral ships sailing for neutral harbors.

All these ships will unload their wares at the wharves of Antwerp, whence they will be carried by the Belgian canals and rivers to supply German factories. At the same time they can load finished products arriving for them from Westphalia, Saxony and Silesia, and quietly pass under the noses of the enormous English warships, which cannot fire their formidable guns at them, for they are theoretically Belgian wares carried in Belgian ships.

One can then understand the international importance of these two ports. Antwerp and Rotterdam are the backdoors

of the German fortress, by which she will continue to communicate with the outside world. As long as they are open, England may well blockade Bremen and Hamburg; she may well patrol the seas with her monstrous Dreadnoughts; all her efforts will be in vain; she will see under the very mouths of her cannons the German industry resupply its factories and distribute as before its products all over the world.

That is why the Kaiser is using all his power to keep open Rotterdam and Antwerp.

For the same reason the government of George V is using all its power to close them.

The Belgian Neutrality

As to Rotterdam, this will, perhaps, not be difficult. Holland has for a long time been drawn into the circle of influence of German politics; her railways are in part under the control of Berlin; her government follows willingly the suggestions of William II.

In case of conflict, whether she wills or not, her cities and harbors would probably from the first hour be occupied by Prussian troops.

England could then treat her as a belligerent power and try to take Rotterdam by force of arms.

But it is not so with Antwerp.

Belgium, they say, is a neutral country. By a solemn treaty all the neighboring powers have agreed in case of war to respect her territory. At the same time if one of them should undertake to march its troops through Belgium, all the others must arm themselves to prevent it.

This is a great obstacle for England, because it is simply indispensable for her to have Antwerp closed, and she cannot accomplish this without violating treaties and running the risk of starting a European war.

Happily there is a means of circumventing this obstacle. Antwerp is not dirtely on the sea; it is like Rouen, Nantes and Bordeaux, a river port located 70 kilometers inland. Therefore, to block its access it is not necessary to land there; it is sufficient to station a squadron at the mouth of the river to bar the passage for merchant vessels.

The Question of Flushing

Only here a new difficulty arises.

The mouth of the Schelde is within Dutch territory and is dominated by a Dutch city, Flushing. Now, the government of Queen Wilhelmina—evidently prompted by William II—decides to fortify that city.

Suppose that this project is carried into effect; that formidable batteries are trained on the mouth of the Schelde, and that a German fleet be stationed under its protection. Thus having provided a good naval base it would force the English dreadnoughts to keep at a distance; and they would try with all their forces to keep open the navigation of the Schelde, the entrance and exit of the port of Antwerp, and there are chances that they would succeed.

Now one can understand the rage which took possession of all the high officials in England at the news that the Dutch government was going to fortify Flushing! Not only has this small place considerable importance of itself, but it is the key to the port of Antwerp. And if Antwerp is not "bottled up" then it is all up with the cabinet of London's project of blockade imposed by the imperious logic of facts.

Then the entire English press strove to overwhelm Holland with threats. And the serious Times itself, the official organ of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared, repeating a famous saying: "Flushing fortified is a pistol pointed at the heart of England."

Intimidated perhaps by these threats, the Dutch government and parliament have not yet put their plan into execution. But from now on the question is a serious one, and one of the gravest confronting Europe.

It is necessary for England's triumph over Germany that Antwerp be closed; to enable Germany to resist, Antwerp must remain open. It is a vital question for both.

It is, therefore, around Antwerp that the fate of the two empires will be decided; and it is on the plains of Belgium that the economic domination of the old world will be determined between the two great nations.

But the neutrality of Belgium has been guaranteed by France. That is why each of the two powers is endeavoring at this moment to draw us into this serious conflict.

"Very well," you say, "if England and Germany absolutely insist on fighting, let them do so! As for us, let us keep out of the quarrel and remain neutral."

That is wisdom itself; unfortunately it is not practicable, for each of the two adversaries want to involve us in the conflict.

England needs our army; Germany needs our money. Both are pulling us; one this way, one that.

And this is the secret of the chauvinistic agitation which the press is fomenting at present. It is only a beginning. Very good reason for investigating the situation with cool heads.

England Needs Our Army

England, as I have shown, in order to throttle German industry, must absolutely blockade Antwerp. But she must also reckon that the Kaiser will not permit her to do this without resistance.

At the first sign of war—and even before the official declaration—it is probable that a German fleet will station itself at Flushing under the protection of the Dutch Forts, and that a Prussian army corps will advance with forced marches to occupy Antwerp.

If this manoeuvre succeeds and an English squadron cannot take the first step, then Antwerp must be taken by land.

But there the method of operation changes: the sea blockade will be superseded by continental war.

England must disembark troops in Belgium; it is necessary that these troops bar the route of the Prussian army and throw it back upon the Rhine or Meuse.

That is why Lord Kitchener, the great English General, spoke these famous words: "The frontier of the British Empire in Europe is not the Straits of Calais, but the line of the Meuse."

A strange formula, which shows what neutrality counts for, in both camps!

But with what troops will England occupy this frontier? This is where the London Cabinet meets with difficulties.

It is well known that England does not have compulsory military service. She alone in Europe has declined to place the heavy burden of a "national army" upon her citizens. Secure in the power of her fleet, she has been content until now with a small army of professional soldiers and a reserve of 200,000 volunteers, brave men, but without training or discipline, and which the Secretary of War, Mr. Haldane, himself denounced as insufficient.

We know what a sad figure this army cut in facing the Boers.

However, if war should break out with Germany, England would have to measure itself, not with peasants, brave but undisciplined, having no knowledge of tactics, but with a regular army, perfectly equipped and trained, splendidly organized, and which is considered to be the best in Europe.

We can see the London "volunteers," with their parade officers, in battle after six weeks' fighting with the German army!

In the presence of this great danger the general staff sounded the alarm. In Parliament, the Commander in Chief, Lord Roberts, made the following statement: "There is only one remedy for the present situation: Compulsory military service for all Englishmen."

Unfortunately this remedy appeared not to be quite to the taste of the English people.

They have always believed it a considerable advantage not to be obliged to spend two years of their lives in the barracks in fatiguing and unproductive drill.

Of course, chauvinistic ideas are just as strong there as they are on the continent. The imperialism of the "great English" is all the more belligerent, since everyone well knows that he is not required to spill his own blood for the glory of the Empire.

But if all had to shoulder gun and knapsack and fight in the plains of Belgium to insure the victory of Mr. Chamberlain's ideas, it is probable that the English chauvinists would lose many of their followers.

Liberals and Conservatives are aware of this powerful opposition of the popular sentiment. They know that by imposing compulsory military service on the citizens of free England they would forever ruin their belligerent policy. After several fruitless attempts in the House of Lords the measure was rejected.

* * * * *

But nevertheless they have to get troops to occupy Belgium and throw the Prussians back on the Meuse.

Then not finding them at home, they thought of France.

"We lack soldiers," they said, "but France has them. Over there beyond the Straits of Calais is a numerous army, well trained, well disciplined, well equipped, capable, in one word, of resisting Germany. The French are brave, they are aggressive; they like war and know how to wage it; if we can impress them with the catchphrase 'national honor,' 'the

highest interest of patriotism' and 'civilization,' they will march. Let us try to interest the French army with us.

"That will not be so difficult. French democracy is for show. The people are in reality governed by an oligarchy of financiers and steel magnates who control the press and politicians.

"Let us bargain with these people. Let us promise them some large war loans, whereby their banks can earn high commissions. Let us bind ourselves to obtain for them some orders of railroads in Turkey and some large concessions in Syria, Ethiopia and Morocco.

"And for which few millions they will sell us the French army."

* * * * *

Thus reasoned these brave people; and their politicians started to work.

In 1903, immediately after the close of the Transvaal War, Edward VII went to Paris, and all the amiable dunces who had so often cried "Long Live Kruger" were now bought by the press to cry "Long Live England."

In order to recompense us for Egypt, where we held financial control, the London Cabinet generously gave us Morocco—which did not belong to them.

And at all our financial banquets they acclaimed the "entente cordiale."

But that did not suffice.

Delcasse, who in 1905 wished to involve us in a war with Germany, having been overthrown, England saw that she would have to act with prudence.

She waited until that friend and companion of Edward VII came back into power. As if by chance, he is appointed Minister of Marine, and—also as if by chance—on the eve of his success it was announced that negotiations were under way between London and Paris for the conclusion of a military treaty.

This treaty, let it be well understood, will be defensive. But it will be easy for the British Government in blockading Antwerp to force Germany to declare war.

And then we, the French, will have to do the fighting on the Belgian plains, not for the King of Prussia this time, but for the King of England!

* * * * *

That is what is in reality being engineered in the twilight of diplomatic correspondence and the silence of the parliaments.

England has always had need of a soldier on the continent. Formerly, during the struggle with Napoleon, she paid the Austrian and Prussian troops to march against France. Today she wants to send our national infantry against the Prussians.

The roles have been changed but the play is the same. It remains to be seen if we will play the game.

France and Germany

I know a great many brave Frenchmen who imagine that Emperor William every morning when taking his chocolate, asks himself whether he shall not give the order for mobilization and launch his Uhlans against Nancy.

They believe that the only desire of the Prussians is to hurl themselves upon us. And it must be confessed that great newspapers do all they can to sustain this fear.

It is indispensable for our steel magnates to secure votes for great numbers of cannon and battleships to enrich their stockholders. Without the fear of the German bogymen what would become of the dividends of Creusot's Gun Works?

Furthermore, it must be recognized that the Berlin Government plays exactly the same game with the German people. Since 1871 every time that Bismarck and his successors wished to procure from the Reichstag a new military septennate and modern armaments, they took two or three articles from *La Patrie* and a speech by Deroulede and dished up the whole with great bursts of eloquence in order to raise the spectre of *Revanche*; and they obtained for their steel magnates all they wished. (We must not forget that the Emperor is one of the principal stockholders of the Krupp firm.)

Thus we have on both sides the same game of threatening talk and stage effects.

But how can we distinguish if these threats are sincere or a mere "metallic" bluff?

To do so it suffices to examine the economic interests of the two powers. In Germany as in France, as in all the great European nations, it is these interests—and not the caprice of monarchs—which dominate the foreign policy and decide for peace or war.

No Economic Conflicts

For forty years there has been no lack of opportunities for the Germans to attack and conquer us. That she has not done so is not because of sympathy for us. It is because the Germans have been entirely absorbed by the idea of making a great industrial nation of their country.

In the "La Force Allemande" I told how, by patient, continuous, methodic efforts, they have succeeded.

Today their very success makes them rivals of Great Britain.

But have they any reasons for entering into a conflict with us?

From a commercial point of view Germany sells almost as much to France as she buys from her. For twenty years exports and imports have been almost balanced.

As for the other part, the Germans export to all the markets of the world products of current use—machines, hardware, cotton goods, etc. We, on the other hand, export none but articles of luxury—Paris wares, dresses, jewelry, etc.—wherein the German taste cannot compete with ours.

There is thus neither commercial competition nor any economic conflict.

"But," someone may say, "there are our colonies. Germany has none; would she not take ours?"

Those who entertain such ideas I advise to read the report of Mr. Violette. They will see the lamentable condition of our colonies. Only one is self-sustaining—Indo-China—and the system of Doumer has so burdened it down that it is on the eve of a general revolt.

Moreover, just before a grave conflict with England, William II cannot afford to multiply his vulnerable points on the face of the globe. He prefers rather to colonize Turkey in Asia under the cover of Ottoman independence.

There remains the conquest of a French province. Alas! Germany is still suffering from the abuse of its annexations—in a hundred and fifty years she has not been able to digest Poland; Danish Schleswig and even Hanover give her nothing but trouble; and she was compelled to grant self-government to the Alsace-Lorraines, whom she has not been able to govern.

There is only one piece of territory which she might want. The Empire has no iron ores. But just on the frontier, in the Department Meurthe-et-Moselle have been discovered

large deposits, some of the richest in the world. The industries beyond the Rhine might be tempted to demand their annexation.

But it is quite superfluous, because our capitalists themselves have ceded to their German rivals, by liberal consents of participation, a considerable portion of their concessions. Why should William II exert himself to take by force a treasure which our great patriotic steel magnates daily deliver to him of their own accord?

In truth I have searched for reasons why the Germans should attack us; I have not found them.

The Franco-German Syndicate of 1902

On the other hand I see plainly the reasons they have for treating us fairly.

Primarily, and that is the essential point, they need our money.

To create an industry, capital is necessary, and Germany has not enough money. No doubt she realizes great profits every year. But she is a relatively new country; she has not the strong reserves of the old nations like England and France, with industries one or two centuries older, and who have accumulated billions in their traditional "stockings."

Every year the creation of new factories absorbs the national savings, and the more the country develops, the more money it needs.

Where find this money except in France, in the country of capitalists without initiative, who do not know how to use this richest treasure of the world, and do not know any better than to lend it to foreigners?

In 1902 William II tried to make a financial alliance with our banks. He has just succeeded in obtaining from the Sultan of Turkey the concession of the Bagdad Railway, which excited the envy of all Europe to a high degree. But Germany was just coming out of a commercial crisis and had no available capital.

The Kaiser then approached our banks. A Franco-German syndicate was formed; it had for its president, Arthur von Gwinner, president of the Deutsche Bank, and for vice-president, M. Vernes, the partner of Rothschild in the Compagnie du Nord and the Compagnie du Midi, manager of the Banque de l'Union Parisienne, of the Banque Ottoman, of the Saloniki-Constantinople Railway, etc. After these came Rouvier, G. Auboyneau, etc.

The agreement made between the financiers, a diplomatic reapproachment became inevitable. And already M. Jules Lemaitre (he had not yet become nationalist and "camelot du roi") was preaching friendship with Germany and to forget the past. No doubt if the financial combination had succeeded we would today have an *entente cordiale* with Germany.

The Visit of Edward VII

But soon England became disquietened.

In this economic struggle with Germany she has only one advantage—an abundance of capital. If France was to lend hers to England's rival, the British supremacy would be definitely compromised.

Soon, at the beginning of 1903, Edward VII came to Paris in great pomp.

The stupefied Parisians, who two years before had shouted, "Long live Kruger! Down with Chamberlain!" had suddenly to learn that they must henceforth cry, "Long live Edward VII!"

What took place between the King and Delcasse, Vernes and some others, history alone can tell. One fact is certain: The following day after the departure of the King for London, the financial agencies announced that M. Vernes and his group had retired from the Bagdad Railway enterprise and that the Franco-German syndicate had been dissolved.

One year later the *entente cordiale* was concluded with England.

In return for giving up entirely the financial control of Egypt, and to reimburse our capitalists for their participation in the Bagdad project, the London Cabinet made us a present of Morocco. They gave it all the more willingly since it did not belong to them, and we can see today from what happened at Fez that a bearskin cannot be bought before the bear is killed!

However that may be, M. Delcasse, henceforth inseparably allied with the fortune of England, soon committed himself to a policy of encircling Germany and dragging us into a war with her.

We know how he was ousted by Rouvier in 1905.

The Efforts of William II

At this moment William II had a fine opportunity to attack us—our entire Nationalist press is unanimous in declaring that our invincible generals would have been beaten then.

The Kaiser did not do it. Oh, not for sympathy for France. It is simply because his interests counselled him to forbear.

Far from attacking us he tried everything to renew the relations with our business men. Ever since 1906 in Asia Minor, in the Ouenza Syndicate, in the Union of Moroccan Mines, he planned to associate the German capitalists with the French capitalists. He had constituted officially a small Franco-German syndicate at Glarus, Switzerland, for the issuance of stock for the Bagdad Railway, his banks borrowed every four months large sums at high interest from the Credit Lyonnaise. Through all these means he endeavored to restore matters to the condition of 1903, before the visit of Edward VII to Paris. Have we not seen at the time of the famous accident to the dirigible Patrie that the Kaiser was first to send wreaths to the funeral of the killed officers?

Once more these manifestations of friendship were not disinterested. If William II tried by all means to secure reapproachment between our two countries, it was because he needed us. It is because his industry requires the assistance of our capital in order to promote its development. And that alone is already a guarantee that Germany does not try to make war on us.

But it is especially in case of an Anglo-German conflict that the French savings would become necessary to the Kaiser. And it is that which makes the situation of our country so delicate.

The Salvation of the Empire is at the Paris Bourse

It is two years since at Hamburg there was held a congress of German bankers, where all who counted for anything in the financial circles of the country attended.

The report said: "Our military mobilization has been made and well made; but our financial mobilization is not ready. A war with England would cost at least five billion francs a year and would last probably two years."

These ten billions—where is Germany to find them? Evidently not in London or New York. There are only the two Austrian and Italian allies, who cannot furnish this money—they have not enough for themselves. And she will

no more get it from the Czar of all Russians! Then it remains for France, this rich country which does not know what to do with its savings, the France which this year subscribed loans for six billion francs (4400 millions are foreign securities). It is the French bondholders who recently loaned two billions to Russia which made it possible for her to resist the assaults of Japan for two years.

If they should deign to do as much for Germany! Then the war loans subscribed at Paris would go to replenish the war chests of Spandau; then the Kaiser would always find the sums necessary to repair his battleships, to equip his troops and feed his soldiers. There would be no industrial crisis and no financial crisis. Germany without exhaustion could sustain the English attack.

The salvation of the Empire lies at the Paris Bourse!

That is the immense service that France solely by means of her savings can render her proud neighbor. And now we comprehend all the efforts of William II to draw her with smiles and threats, willingly or not, into his sphere.

Unfortunately a loan of money to Germany would estrange us from England. The London Cabinet would never permit that France should furnish money to the Berlin people to pay for the shells to bombard the English fleet. And it is a known fact that in the whole world admittance of German securities to the official exchange of Paris would lead to an immediate rupture of the entente cordiale.

Thus we are placed in a delicate position. Each of the two adversaries seeks to engage us one against the other—the one needs our money, the other our army—and we cannot give our assistance to the one without exposing ourselves to the reprisals of the other.

There is one good solution, which is to remain neutral and to give neither military nor financial assistance to either one.

But can we do it? Will Germany not try to take our money by force if we refuse her the loans which she needs? It is a serious problem which must not be decided without due reflection.

Double War, Double Costs

Assume the fight started between the two industrial rivals, and imagine that France remains neutral.

At the very first news of the declaration of war—so writes Mr. Riesser, former president of the Bank of Darm-

stadt—in all Germany, orders will be cancelled, commercial transactions stopped and transportation facilities seized by the troops. Manual labor being scarce, the price of the necessities of life will rise, that of luxuries fall; the capitalists will withdraw their deposits from the banks, the credit establishments will see their chests become empty.

Now then, just at that time the State is obliged to issue, step by step, loans for hundreds of millions to meet the expenses of the war. To attract the capitalists it will offer its obligations at very low prices. The German investors, in order to buy them, will sell their industrial securities, which will suffer a considerable depreciation.

Gold becomes scarce at the moment when there is great need of it. A compulsory course for exchange will have to be declared for the banknotes. A financial crisis will be imminent.

However, it might be that by keeping cool and by confidence in their government, German capitalists, especially if their fleet is not immediately vanquished, will succeed in averting this crisis.

But suppose that France, bound by her military treaty with Great Britain, is compelled to fall in line.

Soon the scene changes. It will suffice no more to send two army corps against Antwerp; the entire army must be mobilized, a million men launched against the Meuse and the Vosges, must be transported, equipped and fed. This is no more one war, but two wars, which will have to be fought; the one on the sea, the other on land—and the latter will be at not the less cost.

Frankly does anyone believe that Germany, which has not enough money for a naval war, would readily take upon herself the enormous burden of a continental war, if not compelled to?

That would be madness. And the German statesmen, and above all the bankers who guide their policy have shown us that they know how to figure.

France Taken as "Hostage"

Oh, I know well that the chauvinistic journals beyond the Rhine (they exist there as well as with us) utter ferocious threats. The notorious Professor Schiemann, the German Deroulede, said: "In case of war with England we shall take France as hostage!" And the old Bismarckian Maximilian Harden declared: "We shall invade France, we shall

impose upon her a war indemnity of twenty billion francs, and with this money we shall defray the expense of the campaign against the English.

This is a simple bluff like our Nationalists like to use, which will not bear inspection for five minutes. Then before they can take away from us ten or twenty billions they first must have made headway against us. Even if the French army is as inferior as is assumed, it will resist easily for at least six weeks, just as the Austrians did at Sadowa and the troops of Napoleon before Sedan. But I learned from a general, who consented to discuss the subject with me at the Ecoles des Hautes Etudes Sociales, that during the first months of hostilities each army will spend from one to one and a half billion francs.

At the precise time when Germany would need all her resources against England she would be compelled to use up a billion or two to wage war against France. It is very imprudent to chase two rabbits at one time, especially two rabbits of such size.

“But,” you will say, “with the war indemnity the Kaiser will get back his outlay and he will still have remaining a large sum to make war against England.”

Thus reason those who know nothing of financial matters. But do they really think that ten or fifteen billions can be paid in “a turn of the hand” like a bill at the grocers?

After the disaster of 1870 it took us more than two years to pay the five billion francs to Germany; and all of Europe, even the Prussians themselves, considered this a remarkable showing of strength. It is admitted that today France is richer than she was then. But if ten, fifteen, or even twenty billions were demanded of her, it would be very good if she took only three or four years to pay them. Even the first billion could not be raised before one or two years. And just then the war with England would already be over and the French money would come too late.

It is precisely this they are counting on in London. They do not give themselves to any false illusions about our military strength! They think we will be beaten on the plains of Belgium and will meet perhaps another Waterloo there. But we will have compelled Germany to meet simultaneously the expenses of a double war, on sea and land; we will have forced her to spend a billion or two for her army instead of employing this money to repair or replace her battleships. We will have contributed thus towards emptying her treasury.

But, as Louis XIV said: "The victory depends upon the last 100 sous piece." The Kaiser, weakened by his efforts on the continent, and not having enough capital to rehabilitate his fleet, will be obliged to capitulate. And that will be the triumph of George V.

In truth, France will probably have been invaded, pillaged, burdened for a whole generation by an enormous war indemnity; but England will have vanquished her rival. Confronted by a conquered Germany and a weakened France, she will again attain and strengthen her absolute preponderance of the world. "Rule Britannia!"

Those are the risks of a combination which tends to transform the *entente cordiale*—an excellent idea—into a military alliance—a dangerous thing.

Germany has no interest in making war on us.

Are we interested in binding ourselves to her adversary to attack her?

It is this last point which remains to be examined.

Neutrality is Possible

Two attitudes are possible:

We may take sides with one of the two powers; or we may remain neutral.

To take sides with Germany is very dangerous. Without doubt the Kaiser would not demand of us either ships or soldiers; he needs only our money. But the registry of German loans at the stock exchange would inevitably result in the rupture of the *entente cordiale*. And that would be the recommencement all over the world of this policy of pin-pricks which in 1898 led us to Fashoda. Never would any clear-headed Frenchman consent to that.

To take sides with England is still more dangerous. The first regiment to cross the Belgian frontier for marching to Antwerp would unchain against us a formidable war. All of the French officers with whom I have consulted assure me that after the measures taken by the German Chief of Staff the shock of German attack would be of a suddenness and violence unheard of.

What is to be done?

Guard neutrality?

That is easy. England has only one means of forcing us to march on Antwerp, and Germany cannot compel us by

force to lend her our savings. For once more, she is financially not in a position to maintain two wars at the same time. The theory of France being held as a hostage is a boast of the German Derouledes.

Under these circumstances only one attitude seems possible, reasonable, prudent, conforming to the interest of the country and for the good of universal peace.

The French government must say to the English: "You shall not have our army!"

And to the Germans: "You shall not have our money!"

Therefore, you will not fight each other, and France will not only have served her own interests, but also those of humanity.

Or, well, if you absolutely insist on massacring each other, very good, go ahead! But don't count on us to help you. In such fratricidal strife not one centime of French money, nor one drop of blood shall we shed.

We shall say to the one as to the other—not a penny! not a soldier!

That is doubtless what France would say, if she were consulted.

The Mad Whirl of Absolutism

Unfortunately she is not asked for her advice. In spite of democratic appearances it is known that the people do not govern and do not control their governors. A small band of capitalists has seized control of the administration and of the great financial associations; they hold in their hands the banks, mines, railways, steamship companies, water, gas and electric companies; in fact, all the economic utilities of France. In the "Guerre Sociale" I have shown how they dominate the Parliament, dispose of the ministers, and have taken into their pay the great newspapers which mold public opinion. Skilfully hidden behind the democratic scenes, they are in reality the masters of the destinies of the country.

But what kind of madness seems to have taken possession of these men—madness of absolute power, the same which carried away Louis XIV and ruined Napoleon. Rarely does such temptation offer itself to any single man or any class. Consider that France could really be the arbiter of the world. If she lends her soldiers to England the German colossus may collapse; if she lends her money to the Kaiser, the Prussians will have the best of it, and it is perhaps the

British Empire which will be dismembered and fall. What a temptation for an oligarchy without counterweights and without control to throw its sword into the balance and to decide which shall be the world empire! Why would not such a role intoxicate Delcasse, a great "big head" with a small soul whom his courtiers compare to the great ministers of the past and who wants to impress on history his name as a Richelieu.

The Financiers and Alsace-Lorraine

I have mentioned the good people who, before the imminence of an Anglo-German conflict, caught themselves dreaming of "revanche."

Ah! Alsace-Lorraine! I give assurance that our financiers never thought of it—never in their calculations, never in the combinations of our diplomatists can we find a trace of this idea. Would it pay us to reconquer Alsace, and what effect would it have on the dividends of our great banks?

But there is more: Wonderful cotton mills have developed at Muhlhausen; powerful steel works, admirably equipped, have come into existence all along the frontier. Since they are superior to ours we had to protect ours against theirs by an import tariff. Suppose that the frontier were again set back to the Rhine, all these factories would make disastrous competition to Creusot, and the cotton mills of the Vosges, Lille and Rouen. They must remain outside of the line of custom houses. Not only have our business men not thought of taking Alsace-Lorraine back again, but if the Kaiser should offer it to them, they would not want it! That is why they are allowing the dream of revenge among the people to be lulled to sleep.

The Price of Blood

But what do they want anyway?

Just this:

1. It is known that our business men received from England as a prize for the entente cordiale, Morocco; they had to have the monopoly of the loans and public works, the railroads, harbors, telegraphs, etc. Compelled to go to Algieras, they cannot console themselves for having to share all their concessions with Germany. A war would be a good way to oust an embarrassing partner and to recover the monopoly promised by England.

2. Germany wishes to make of Turkey a preserve where the mines, loans and railways will be reserved for her own

citizens. It is a fine bait of which the Vitalis, the Auboyneaus and Revoil of the Banque Ottomane, Rouvier of the Banque Francaise and Schneider of Creusot used to have first choice and the biggest share. Helping England to crush Germany would be a nice way to get rid of a serious competitor. They would then have only England with whom to share the lucrative honor of civilizing the Turks.

3. In case of war, several billions would be borrowed in Paris, as much for account of London as for France. And our great banks cherish the memory of big profits realized in 1871 and 1872.

These are the advantages which the financial oligarchy can draw from an intervention in the conflict.

Of course, I know very well that in present day capitalistic circles it is necessary to develop commercial markets. But does that justify a war? Compare the mining concessions of Morocco, rich though they are, with the ravages of a war in France. Place on one side of the scale 600 miles of Turkish railway and in the other the horrible massacre by our engines of war, the suffering of the wounded, the grief of the wives and mothers, and the misery of the orphans; and tell me if the dividends of Creusot are worth the blood of 200,000 young Frenchmen!

That is all the benefit which our country could receive from such an adventure. I defy anyone to prove the contrary!

But these people are not the master of their own destinies. A small, irresponsible, but powerful, coterie exerts all its efforts on diplomacy and drags them along.

They are the ones who involved us in the Morocco adventure. And we know that our generals more often obey its orders than those of the government. M. Ribot himself publicly complained of this.

They are the ones who supported Delcasse in 1905 when he brought us to the point of war with Germany. They are the ones who today have returned him to power and seek to transform the entente cordiale into a military alliance.

England knows their power; and that is why, without caring about parliament or public opinion, she treats with these men and in every way associates them with her affairs.

The Plot

Shall we be able to recognize any of the threads of this intrigue?

Let us follow the strange affair of Bernard Maimon, which it seems now, is to be suppressed.

A journalist, M. Andre Tardieu, allied with the family of Waldeck-Rousseau, formerly Secretary of the Embassy, a high official of the Ministry of the Interior, editor of the foreign politics department of the Temps, the confident of the Ministers, with access to their private offices at all hours—is considered all over Europe to be the official mouthpiece of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is from his articles that the other French newspapers, the foreign press, and even the European Cabinets, try to learn of the intentions of the French government.

Now, England, to put a check on the German railway from Constantinople to Bagdad, is planning to build another road from Homs in Syria to Bagdad.

An administrative committee is formed. Whom do we find: Sir Babington Smith, the right hand man of Sir Ernest Cassel, the former banker of Edward VII, Cherif Pascha, a Turkish general, who in Paris combatted vigorously the policy of the Comite Union et Progres; and besides these, M. Andre Tardieu.

The latter has made this enterprise a personal matter. He is exerting himself to obtain the support of the French government.

However, M. Pichon hesitates to follow. Thereupon, M. Tardieu, in the Temps, though he had previously supported our Ministry faithfully, sharply criticized his policy.

At the same time (through a mere coincidence, which should, however, be mentioned) his partner in the Homs-Bagdad Railway affair, the Levantin Bernard Maimon, through the mediation of young Rouet, protege of Tardieu, made away with secret documents stolen from the Quai d'Orsay. A London paper, of which he is correspondent, published a resume, likewise secret, of the negotiations which had taken place at Potsdam between William II and the Russian Minister Sasonow.

At once the Parisian bankers refused the Czar the loan of 1200 million francs already announced at the Bourse; Nicholas II responded by withdrawing his troops from the German border. And in spite of the official denials, all Europe is asking itself today what is left of the Franco-Russian alliance.

That is an example of what the little coterie of business men which surrounds and penetrates our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, can do.

In the present state of the Old World when a match can set fire to all Europe, a few brawlers attracted by the bait of a railway concession in Turkey can involve France in a horrible cataclysm.

The Plan

But, they say, in admitting that these people want war, can we believe for a moment that the French people would let them do this? How could they persuade them to let themselves be massacred for such futile ambitions?

The plan is simple; it is all arranged and we can follow its realization every day.

1. They are negotiating at this moment a military treaty with Great Britain. In case of war with Germany the British fleet would protect our Channel coast and our troops would march on Antwerp.

It is well understood (this is to reassure public opinion) that this treaty is to be purely defensive.

But you have noticed that all modern wars are always defensive? If you ask a Frenchman who was the aggressor in 1870 he will tell you that it was Bismarck in falsifying the dispatches of Ems. And put the same question to a German, he will answer you with the same good faith that it was Napoleon, since it was he who declared the war.

In the same way all Russians are convinced that it was Japan who, by sinking the Russian ships in the harbor of Chemulpo, provoked the conflict; and all the Japanese will reply that the Czar by penetrating Korea threatened the independence and security of their nation.

In fact, when a war breaks out, it is because the two hostile governments equally wanted it; but each of the two peoples is equally convinced that they are only defending themselves.

Then when it pleases the Foreign Office to make war, its diplomats will know how to arrange for placing the responsibility for the conflict on the adversary; and we will have to march by virtue of a "defensive" treaty to assist George V.

2. But if we want the French peasant to march with good spirit, public opinion must be prepared. For such purpose he must be persuaded that the Prussians think forever of invading French territory. Then the servile press seizes upon the most trifling incidents, distorts and magnifies them,

and disquiets the public. An incident in the foreign legion, such as the lawsuit "La Lorraine sportive," or an aeroplane flight, are good stuff to arouse in us fear and hatred of Germany.

One large newspaper which takes its news service by special wire from the Times office, excels in this game. And this is only the beginning!

3. And finally when the public will have been sufficiently aroused, when the idea of a German peril is sufficiently implanted in our minds, then some fine night the English fleet will sail full steam for Flushing. At the same time almost the Prussian regiments at Aix-la-Chapelle will embark on express trains on their way to Antwerp.

Also, according to custom, the French government will seize all telegrams and letters which might give information of the movement of belligerent troops. Later an official note will be sent to the press. The next morning all newspapers will point in headlines as large as your hand these prophetic words:

THE BELGIAN NEUTRALITY HAS BEEN VIOLATED.
THE PRUSSIAN ARMY IS MARCHING ON LILLE.

For—such is the trap—they will not say that the objective of the corps from Aix-la-Chapelle is Antwerp; they will only say it is directed against the French frontier.

At this terrible news repeated by the millions of voices of the press with great effect, the peasant of Brittany, or Cantal, the little bourgeois patriot, the badly informed workman, persuaded that France is attacked, will shoulder their knapsacks. Without giving them time to reflect they are shipped with all haste in cattle cars on their way to the Belgian plains. The German army, hindered in its march upon Antwerp, will fall upon them.

And this is how, by the astuteness of a small group of financiers and diplomats, a great people will find itself drawn into a war entirely against its will.

The Lone Chance for Peace

Is the war inevitable?

I do not think so.

If in the economic conflict so strenuously engaged in between England and Germany, vital interests are at stake, it is not the same for France. And we must always hope that a sudden awakening of public conscience and the fear

of a revolution may deter these business men before the accomplishment of their dangerous intrigues.

But it is necessary to consider well, such a sudden awakening of the public conscience will not happen if the people are not warned in time.

The financial coterie which are wirepulling in the back rooms of the chancelleries is not large, but holds the most terrible of trumps—the popular ignorance.

The great words “Honor, the Fatherland, the Flag, National Defense,” in the names of which for centuries so many crimes have been committed, and so many unjust and useless wars waged, are always powerful to sway the masses.

To hinder the financiers from making use of them, it is necessary to arouse public opinion and to shake off torpid indifference.

And above all, the preachers of peace who hypnotize people into a false security, must be defied.

That may please some politicians and some naïve people who lull themselves to sleep with the fond hope of compulsory arbitration.

As a matter of fact, Germany has declared that she will not accept it; and Sir John Fisher, supreme chief of the English fleet and delegate to the Conference at the Hague, announced with brutal frankness:

“In case of war, I should violate all the rules of all the Peace Conferences—I have but one purpose, and that is to win. The diplomats can negotiate afterwards.”

It is, therefore, a dangerous illusion to count on the friendly regulation of international conflicts by arbitration.

At this very moment, moreover, there is evidence of a gradual wavering of the pacifist propaganda among the middle classes due to the pressure of the governments and the hostile financiers.

Even amongst the working classes formerly opposed to militarism, an attempt is made to spread the militarist fever.

In Germany, Socialist politicians, and not the small ones either, declared in the Reichstag that in case of war not a German Socialist would be missed at roll call.

In England, a Socialist named Blatchford has published a thundering brochure, “The German Peril,” which is a direct appeal to the chauvinistic passions. And the congress

of the Labor party, with Hyndman, voted for the strengthening of the navy.

Even in France, Jaures, forgetting the traditional cry of his party, "Rather revolution than war!", under the pretext of organizing the new army, proposed to militarize our children of the primary schools, demanded that all our lawyers, doctors and professors taken from the bourgeoisie, be made officers, and preached with his customary eloquence the return to the patriotic and warlike traditions of 1792.

It is against this revival of chauvinistic passions that we must now defend ourselves.

For this there is only one remedy: Instruct the people as to the true situation in Europe; accustom them to discern underneath diplomatic conflicts the intrigues of business men; show them beneath the spread eagle words Honor, Fatherland and National Safety, the orders, concessions and loans which are the real motives of war. And then when they are invited to go and shed their blood on the plains of Belgium to assure the Creusot dividends, there will be produced such a formidable arousing of popular feeling, not alone among the workmen, but also with the peasants and middle classes, that the financial oligarchy will recoil and these men of prey will halt on the threshold of their crime.

That is the only hope of peace left to us.

"To **dare** to tell the truth to men of courage!"

May, 1911.

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